



Our Office is Moving to a New Location!

The offices of the Southeast Conference are on the move. The building that we currently occupy has been sold and we need to be in new office space before the end of the year.

Therefore, as of **December 8, 2015**, we will be leasing an office suite in **The Commons at 125 Ellis Street NE in Atlanta**. The location is easily accessible via public transportation (the Peachtree Center MARTA train station is just two blocks to the west) and is centrally located near major interstate highways. ([Click here for a map.](#))

Our new mailing address will be 105 Courtland St NE, Atlanta GA 30303-2422. This is the address of First Congregational Church UCC in downtown Atlanta.

We are pleased that we are able to have closer connections with a local church and look forward to welcoming visitors to our new space. Parking and entry are at the back of the building.



StillSpeaking Writers at Kirkwood UCC in Atlanta on Tues, Dec 3

Join the UCC's StillSpeaking Writer's Group for an evening of reading and conversation with some of your favorite Daily Devotional writers and members of the writers group:

- Kenneth L. Samuel
- Donna Schaper
- Tony Robinson
- Quinn Caldwell
- Mary Luti
- Matt Laney
- Matt Fitzgerald

The writers will be reading selections from their 2015 Advent devotional, *Wonder*. The event is free and

open to the public.

Thursday, December 3, 2015
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Kirkwood United Church of Christ
2033 Hosea L. Williams Drive NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30317-2501
([location map and directions](#))

Following our time together with the Writers Group, we'll keep up the fellowship across the street at The Pullman, our neighborhood pub. Everyone is Welcome!!!

Learn more about the Writers Group: ucc.org/writers-group
To subscribe to the UCC StillSpeaking Daily Devotional, visit ucc.org/daily_devotional

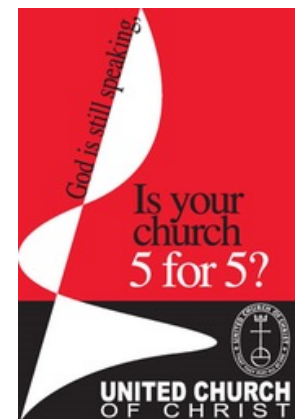


Will Your Church be "5 for 5" in 2015?

The success and sustainability of the United Church of Christ's national ministries relies on your church's contribution to basic operating support and mission.

Being "5 for 5" means that your church is a leader, providing support to Our Church's Wider Mission and the Special Mission Offerings: One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors In Need and The Christmas Fund.

In December, the fifth and final special offering will be taken. It is the **Christmas Fund** and it provides direct financial assistance to retired and active United Church of Christ authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses. Support includes pension and health premium supplementation, emergency assistance, and Christmas thank-you checks.



For more information about 5 for 5, visit ucc.org/ocwm_special-support.

OCWM Basic Support Statements and Pledge Cards

Local congregations should have received the third quarter statement of your congregation's OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) Basic Support Statement for 2015, along with the Pledge Card for your congregation's commitment to OCWM Basic Support for 2016. This will help us plan for the coming year. **Please return the Pledge Card before January 15, 2016.**

We will close the books for 2015 on January 11, 2016. Please ensure that your 2015 commitment is in the office by that date. If we do not receive your contribution by that date, your contribution will be listed for 2016.

We are grateful to all the churches who support the work of the Southeast Conference and, by extension, the national setting and our global ministries. We are grateful for all the churches who have pledged to be Covenant Keepers at a 10% tithe. And we encourage those who are working toward that

tithing goal to continue to increase your contribution annually until you meet your goal.

We are also grateful for the increasing pattern of churches to send their contributions on a quarterly or even a monthly basis. This is a great aid to the cash flow of the Southeast Conference. It is difficult to maintain financial stability when the bulk of contributions come in the last quarter of the year.

2016 is the 50th Anniversary of the Southeast Conference

50 years is a significant time span but there are people in the Southeast Conference who have stories to tell of the good old days and of the struggle and of the process of becoming who we are today.

We have started a planning process that will span the entire year and engage the Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference in June. We already know that Rev. John Dorhauer, UCC General Minister and President, will be with us in June. You will be receiving the commemorative calendars which lift up and celebrate our individual congregations. We are working on historical vignettes and a program book. We are looking at how we celebrate Jubilee. And we are working to find partners in ministry to make this year memorable and a light to the nations as we remember and reflect.

If you have suggestions about how we might celebrate, who needs to be lifted up or consulted, or if you would like to contribute your gifts and graces to the planning process, please contact June Boutwell at jboutwell@secucc.org.

Commemorative Calendars Arriving at Your Church Soon

Starting December 8, we will begin boxing and mailing out the 2016 Commemorative 50th Anniversary Wall Calendars to every church. These lovely, full color calendars, displaying photos and dates for every Southeast Conference church, are sure to delight each and every one of our UCC members and friends. Suggested calendar cost is \$15.00.



Questions should be directed to Debbie Spearman, Generosity Coordinator at dspearman@secucc.org.



We are continuing the process of praying for authorized ministers, congregations, and ministry groups throughout 2015. Each month, we will publish a weekly list for the month and post them weekly on our Facebook page. We encourage you to include these prayer requests in your local church newsletter, share them with your prayer circle, and include them in your own prayers.

- [Click here to download the December prayer list](#)
- [Click here to download the entire 2015 prayer list](#)

Highlights for September:

- Prayers for **World AIDS Day** on December 1.
- Prayers for **Rev. Laurie Hill** as she is challenged by a medical issue. She is serving Fairfield Glade Community Church in Tennessee.
- Prayers for **Rev. Bob Hurst**, United Church of Huntsville, as he undergoes hip surgery on

December 28.

- Continued prayers for **Rev. Michael McCaulley**, Peace Church, Clemson South Carolina.
- For **Garden of Grace UCC** in Columbia South Carolina and the surrounding communities as they continue to recover from flooding.
- Prayers for **Lex Cade-White** as she is ordained at Ebenezer UCC in Sheboygan Wisconsin on December 20. She is serving as a chaplain at Hospice Advantage.
- Prayers for **Rev. Angie Wright** as she resigns her position as founding pastor of Beloved Community Church in Birmingham Alabama. Her last Sunday is December 27.
- Prayers for **Rev. Debbie Douglas** as she resigns her position as pastor of First United Church, Belvidere Tennessee. Her last Sunday is December 27.
- Welcome to **Rev. Sharon Temple** as a Designated Transitional Minister for a two year term at Brookmeade UCC in Nashville.
- Welcome to **Rev. Bruce Schoup** as the Designated Minister for a two year term at Peace Church in Clemson South Carolina.
- Prayers for **Fairfield Glade Community Church** as they celebrate their 40th anniversary on December 6.

Churches in Transition:

Oak Grove Congregational Christian, Pine Mountain Georgia; Church of the Savior, Alpharetta Georgia; Pensacola UCC, Pensacola Florida; Pilgrim Congregational UCC, Chattanooga Tennessee; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville Tennessee; Beloved Community, Birmingham Alabama; First United Church, Belvidere Tennessee.

Jottings from June

As the year comes to a close and I reflect on the almost two years of ministry with you, I find myself reminded of the theme of the General Synod this past summer, Unexpected Places. There has been much that has been unexpected here in this ministry among you.

I certainly did not expect to be moving our offices to a new location. The hours spent in meetings with building management and prospective buyers and brokers were not on the calendar. The hours spent on looking for new space and lease negotiations and attorney review of documents and packing and moving were not on the calendar.

The financial condition of the Conference was to be expected. But the necessity to act to protect our fiduciary interests in several ways including investment accounts, retaining a new accounting firm, and the need for a balanced budget as well as the budget preparation process were a bit unexpected. And the attention to this will need to continue.

I had hoped to engage the Conference and leadership in a visioning and strategic planning process but the necessity to do board development and repair and restore and strengthen relationships required a depth of presence I had not expected. And that work will continue as I seek to equip this Conference and its leaders and congregations to live into the future that God envisions for this ministry.

I did not expect the wonderful opportunity to be present as a leader as we celebrate 50 years as a UCC Conference. And the stories and people I have encountered have been rich and moving and occasions for grieving and joyous thanksgiving.

All families, even church families have their crises, but I did not expect the extent to which I would be asked to help with pastoral transitions and congregational conflict. The flip side of this is the unexpected number of persons in this Conference who are seeking to follow the call of God. I think we probably have more members per capita in some process toward authorized ministry than any other conference in the UCC.

I do not regret any of these unexpected situations. Indeed they have afforded me the opportunity to get to know people and places and ministries in a way that has been most gratifying and has deepened my appreciation for the strength of faith and character and perseverance present in this Conference.

Music often defines my thoughts when I am engaged in reflection. Here are a couple of verses of



a song that has been running through my head these days.

*Many times I've been alone and many times I've cried.
Anyway you'll never know the many ways I've tried.
The long and winding road that leads to your door
will never disappear; I've seen that road before.
It always leads me here, lead me to your door.*

Scripture reminds us that if we knock, the door will be opened and if we ask, we will receive. I hope that you know that my door is open and I welcome your questions and sharing of your needs as we, together, minister in this place, in this time, among God's people. Many blessings in this season of anticipation and waiting for an unexpected miracle to change our lives.

Save the Date

January 1, 2016 - National Youth Event Registration Opens

January 15-18, 2016 - Winter Youth Retreat
Blowing Rock Conference Center, Blowing Rock NC

July 26-29, 2016 - National Youth Event in Orlando, Florida
(http://www.ucc.org/news_national_youth_event_2016_09232015)



Transforming Churches • Transforming Lives
SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

New Conference Grants Awarded

The Conference is pleased to announce the grant recipients for the Fall cycle, 2015. These grants were made possible from the Transforming Churches-Transforming Lives Capital Campaign.

- **First Congregational UCC, Talladega AL** Their project is to purchase 2 laptop computers, a printer and internet service. This is the church's first-ever establishment of internet. Access to internet and email is essential to building covenant with other churches, the Conference and National UCC offices.
- **Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta GA** Their project is to build a new street sign with LED Display. All who have ever visited Central know the difficulty in finding the church entrance. A new sign with LED displays will provide greater visibility and will assist their advertising of church ministries and events to the public.
- **Church of the Savior UCC, Knoxville TN** COS will use their grant for a re-design of their website, new video equipment, advertising outreach to the University of Tennessee community and new sign banners at the church.
- **Decatur UCC, Decatur GA** Building and expanding their congregation is the goal of their project. They will purchase a projection system, upgrade their Wi-Fi, and market themselves with local advertising.
- **Pleasant Hill Community UCC, Pleasant Hill TN** Their year-long project is called "Living Legacies, Inspiring a Culture of Service to Others". Through formal interviews and recordings, their goal is to preserve the unique histories of those who have made significant differences in social justice and civil rights work. These stories hope to inspire a new generation of progressive, faith-influenced activists.
- **Emmanuel UCC, Greenville SC** In order to market EUCC in the South Carolina Upstate and

increase visitors, Emmanuel UCC will buy sponsorship advertising on WEPR public radio in Upstate SC. They will begin their advertising during Lent, 2016. Emmanuel is a new church start.

- **Open Table UCC Mobile, AL** Open Table will work collaboratively with Free2Be to provide direct support to the underserved LGBTQ youth population (14 to 18 year olds) of the Mobile area. The grant monies, which will be matched by Free2Be, will be used to provide rental space, resources, training and program development. Open Table desires to make this population their "Signature Ministry" in Mobile.

May God's blessing be upon all these inspirational projects. The next cycle for accepting Grant applications will open January 18 to March 18, 2016.

Winter Youth Retreat 2016

Get your registrations in for the Winter Youth Retreat before the deadline. Over 100 people from Southeast and Southern Conferences are already registered for fun in the snow, to hear Rev. Waltrina Middleton speak and Alatheia perform!

Visit the Blowing Rock Conference Website for more details and registration forms:

brccenter.org/winter-youth-retreat.html



Southeast and Southern Conference youth and leaders are invited to come together January 15-17 at the Blowing Rock Conference Center in the Great Smoky Mountains for a weekend of worship, service, snow, and fun as we take time to build relationships and nurture our faith. This year we will consider the question asked in the Gospel of Luke, "Who is my neighbor?"

Special guests for the weekend include Rev. Waltrina Middleton, the National UCC Minister for Youth Advocacy & Leadership Formation and Alatheia, an acoustic, americana-folk, singer-songwriter, harmony-driven female duo from the mountains of Tennessee (alatheia.com).

The Winter Youth committee this year is Lacey Brown (Southeast Conference), Sharon Wheeler and Elizabeth Schiemann (Southern Conference).

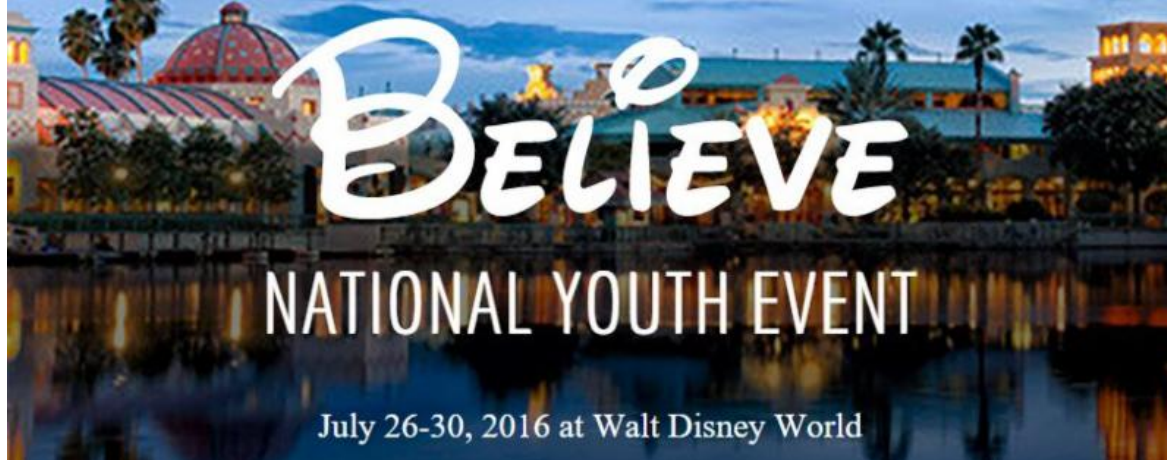
Make Plans Now for the National Youth Event

Join UCC and Disciples youth from across the country and world at Walt Disney World's Coronado Springs Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.

The National Youth Event (NYE) is a spirited quadrennial event centered on faith, leadership, service and social justice first inaugurated in 1980. It is celebrated as the largest denominational gathering for the United Church of Christ with an expected attendance of 4,000 participants.

NYE 2016 will bring many firsts for this youth inspired gathering, including hosting the event on a non-college campus for the first time in NYE history! In 2016, we proudly partner with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a sister denomination, to jointly host NYE! It will be the first National Youth Event that will invite families and non-youth visitors to attend.

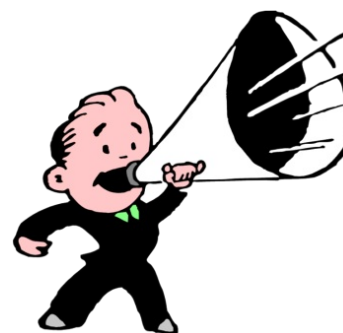
Visit ucc.org/nye for all the details.



Communications Update: Changing to Serve You Better

In an attempt to be more effective in communicating to the Conference, we will be changing some of the ways we have been using to get the news out.

Beginning in January 2016 this newsletter will be published on the 1st and 15th of the month. We are asking you to submit any articles of interest and news of events coming up in your church or community as they are available so that we can post them on the Conference website or on our Facebook page. The newsletter will then become a summary of ongoing and upcoming events and news about your ministries.



We will continue to publish the Caring Community and ask that you look at this and publish the names of those who minister among us and the houses of worship that serve their communities, as well as the concerns and joys of the wider conference, as a way of lifting all our ministries in prayer on a weekly basis. Let us know of your prayers for pastors, lay leaders, births, deaths, anniversaries, illness, or concern.

All communications should be directed to communicationsdirector@secucc.org. That way we can streamline the process of knowing what you have to share and get the word out. We often hear that no one in the rest of the Conference is interested in what we are doing in our community. But that sharing and lifting up what the Spirit is doing is a way of encouraging others to go and do likewise and to stir the creative juices.

Let us know how we are doing. We welcome your feedback and would appreciate you sending us your local newsletters either digitally or hard copy, [like our Facebook page](#), subscribe to the newsletter, and let us know if you have a Facebook page and/or website that we can visit.

PATHWAYS Celebrates Fall Commencement for the Advanced Theological Education (Level 3) Program

This fall, PATHWAYS is proud to present five Level 3 graduates who have faithfully completed the Advanced Level of PATHWAYS Theological Education program designed to equip the learners for ordained ministry in the United Church of Christ:

- Marsha Brown - Pastor, Phoenix Christian Church UCC, Wildersville, TN
- Shonda Deranleau - Licensed Minister, Iowa Conference, Creston, IA
- Heidi Hulme - Pastor, Faith UCC, Davenport, IA
- Mary O'Riley - Pastoral Intern, UCC Congregational Church, Creston, IA
- Kate Stulce - Pastoral Associate, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Chattanooga, TN



These graduates, coming from both the Southeast Conference and the Iowa Conference, entered the program back in January of 2013, and continued on their learning journey through Level 2 and Level 3 for three years. In the effort of meeting at a neutral place of worship, the Commencement Service took place in St. Louis, MO - by the generous hospitality of the Hope United Church of Christ - on the evening of November 13, 2015.

The graduates are in the MID process working with their authorizing bodies toward ordination; as PATHWAYS #1 Level 3 graduates, they celebrated the graduation ceremony in the presence of family, relatives, friends, and PATHWAYS staff. Their success in the program testifies to the value and the importance of multiple (educational) paths to authorized ministry in times of changing landscape of theological education such as these. May God's blessings and grace be upon their path as they continue the path to fulfill God's calling where they are.

View more photos and videos of the graduation on our Facebook page: facebook.com/pathways.ucc

To view a video with testimonials about the benefits of the PATHWAYS Theological Education program, visit our [YouTube page](#).

Live and Learn Lunches from the Training and Counseling Center

The Training and Counseling Center at St. Luke's (TACC) hosts "Live & Learn Lunches" on the third Tuesday of each month, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

- **December 15: The Spectrum of Hoarding** -- What Is It About The Need To Hold On To Things?
- **January 19: Supporting Those Who Have Lost Someone to Suicide** -- What to Say, What Not To Say, and Approaching Grief in Our Own Way
- **February 16: Adult Children & Seniors Latter Life Planning** -- How to discuss personal, medical, and legal issues with older parents and as a family

Contact Shannon Ball at SBall@taccatstlukes.com or visit trainingandcounselingcenter.org for more information.

Amber Kirkendoll is a Brown Endowment Scholar

Congratulations to Amber Kirkendoll, pastor at Safe Harbor Family Church in Flowood, Mississippi. It has been announced that she is one of the 66 Brown Endowment Scholars selected for the 2015-16 academic year. She is one of two Scholars selected from a regional educational program. She is currently completing level two of the PATHWAYS Program.

Applications for the Brown Endowment scholarships will be available from December 15, 2015 through March 15, 2016. Application deadline is April 1, 2016. For more information ucfunds.org/the-brown-endowment/

We love to hear about what is happening in your church or your ministry. Submit articles, photographs separately, links, and event information to us at any time. Submissions may be posted on the Southeast Conference website, in the electronic newsletter, on our Facebook page, or shared on Twitter. Send via email to communicationsdirector@secucc.org.

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